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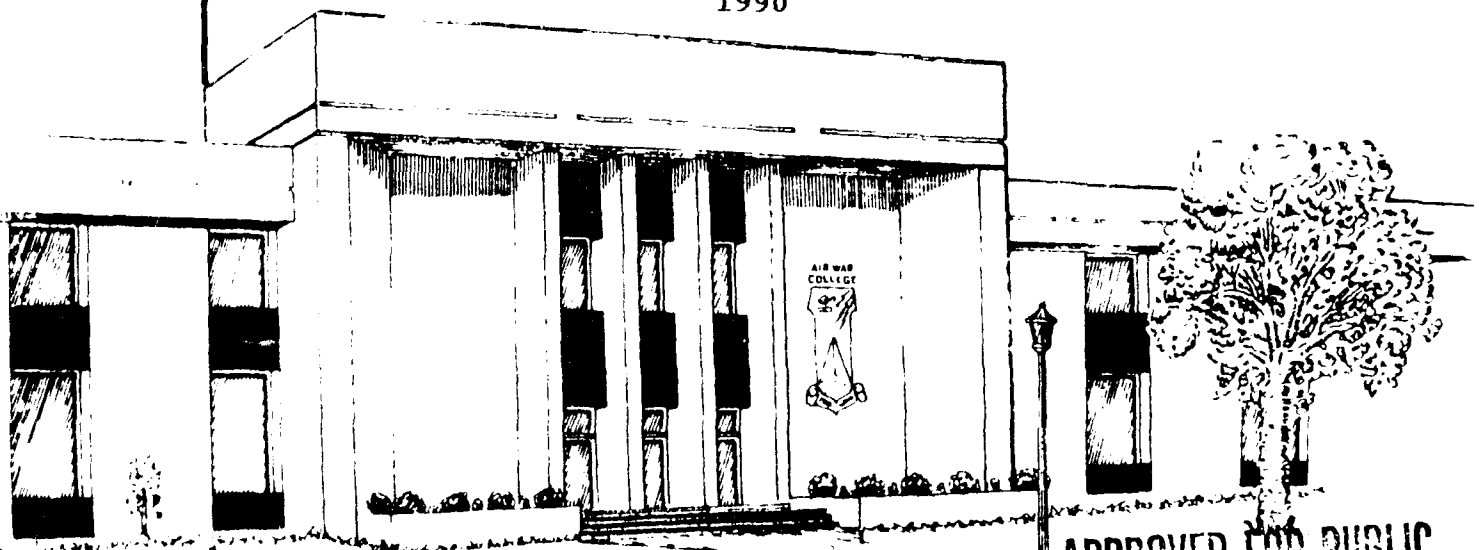
## RESEARCH REPORT

THATCHER GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP OF BRITISH NEWS MEDIA  
IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CAMPAIGN: A MODEL FOR FUTURE  
UNITED STATES MILITARY EMPLOYMENTS?

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1990



AIR UNIVERSITY  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CAMPAIGN: A MODEL FOR FUTURE  
UNITED STATES MILITARY EMPLOYMENTS?

by

William W. Cultice  
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM  
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Lieutenant Colonel James S. O'Rourke, IV

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1990

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Thatcher Government Censorship of British News Media  
During the Falkland Islands Campaign: A Model for Future United  
States Military Employments? AUTHOR: William W. Cultice,  
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF.

The British experience with censorship during the Falkland Islands Campaign can offer a limited model for the U.S. government in remote, low intensity conflicts in locations where the news media are dependent on military support for transportation, logistics and communication requirements. Censorship of news media in general war in Central Europe, for example, will be difficult if not impossible due to well established European and foreign media possessing an extensive communications capability already in-theater. However, the British experience is instructive for the United States concerning operational security, public opinion, disinformation and misinformation, government credibility and propaganda, and the need for good military-media relations. The study concludes by recommending the United States develop a plan to replace the Wartime Information Security Plan, which was rescinded in 1987.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel William W. Cultice (M.P.A., Golden Gate University, B.S., Bowling Green State University) has been interested in military-and media relations and the impact of censorship on government operational security and public opinion. He has served as an executive officer, administration officer and an audiovisual officer in a wide variety of positions supporting military airlift, tactical fighter, and space and missile launch operations; research and development; Strategic Air Command combat missile crew training; and has served on the Air Staff with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Command, Control, Communications and Computers.

Colonel Cultice is a graduate of the Air Force Institute of Technology, where he completed an Education With Industry assignment with the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York. He is also a graduate of the Squadron Officer School, the Air Command and Staff College, the National Defense University and the Air War College. Colonel Cultice's decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In peace time, the sole responsibility of a newspaper is to inform, to enlighten and illuminate. In war time, a great part of the responsibility is not to inform, but to suppress, to guard, to screen information of the most interesting sort. This is the paradox confronting us at the present time. (1:4)

--Frank Luther Mott, 1943

In 1987, the United States Department of Defense rescinded Department of Defense Instruction 5230.7, Wartime Information Security Program. (2:1) This act, for the first time in more than 110 years, left no formal method for the U.S. armed forces to impose censorship on press coverage of military operations. Although difficult to employ and enforce at times, censorship had been a feature of U.S. war policy in the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and in Korea. Years later in Vietnam and Grenada, there was no formal censorship, but those conflicts saw a deterioration in the traditionally cooperative military-media relationship.

Today, many question if military censorship can ever be realistically imposed again. The press has grown more independent, professional, and more fiercely determined than ever to uphold the "public's right to know." In addition, profound revolutions in communications technology have made it possible to instantly transmit and receive live television pictures,



voice and data from virtually anywhere in the world. Yet, some things haven't changed. The U.S. Military's need to maintain operational security is just as vital to our national security today as when Washington crossed the Delaware River in 1776.

The purpose of this study is to determine if Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government censorship of the British news media during the 1982 Falkland Islands Campaign offers a model for the U.S. government and military in future conflicts involving our armed forces. The study traces the history of United States war correspondence and censorship; explores reasons for the breakdown of press and government relations in Vietnam and Grenada; reviews key legal cases regarding First Amendment rights to publish and the government's rights to restrict information; discusses the changing nature of the press and communications technology; explores initiatives to improve military-media relations; and reviews censorship in the Falklands Campaign. Finally, the report analyzes significant censorship aspects from the campaign, discusses their potential application for the United States in future force employments, and recommends that the United States develop a replacement for the Wartime Information Security Program.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORY OF U.S. WAR CORRESPONDENCE AND GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP--THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION TO THE KOREAN CONFLICT

I say with the press unfettered as now we are defeated  
to the end of time. 'Tis folly to say the people must  
have news. (3:1)

--General William Tecumseh Sherman

Reporting of war in one form or another has been a part of American military operations and American journalism since the Revolution. Censorship, on the other hand, is a more recent event, first occurring in the Civil War. This chapter provides a brief history of American war correspondence and government censorship.

#### The Revolutionary War

There were no war correspondents to report on the battles of the American Revolution; instead, newspapers relied exclusively on the chance arrival of private letters and of official and semi-official messages. The lack of means of communication contributed to the delay of news. (4:99) At the height of the revolution there were 70 newspapers in the United States. (5:6)

#### The War of 1812

As during the Revolution, organized war reporting during the War of 1812 was unknown. News of battles usually originated in Washington after official action reports by field

commanders were made, but news frequently came by way of mail or express from an observer near the scene. The delay in receiving newsworthy material is demonstrated by General Andrew Jackson having fought the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1814, not knowing that the peace treaty ending the war had been signed in Paris two weeks earlier on December 24, 1813! (4:196)

#### The Mexican-American War

The Mexican-American War in 1846 and 1847 was the first foreign war to be covered by American correspondents and marked the beginning of modern war correspondence. (4:249) Newspapers employed "occasional correspondents"--former printers and reporters who joined the army as volunteers and wrote to their papers with news of the battles. Communication back to the United States was difficult, but the press developed a 2000-mile network of pony express, steamers, railroads and telegraph which repeatedly beat army couriers. (6:165) Yet despite this network, published news reports still lagged two to four weeks behind the battle. (4:250)

#### The Civil War

The Civil War was a watershed in news reporting and for the first time, government censorship. It is probable that no other war has been so thoroughly covered by eyewitness correspondents. In addition, newspapers such as the New York Times, New York Tribune, and World often gave as much as one third of their total space to battle news. (4:329) Wide-spread use of the telegraph enabled correspondents to quickly transmit reports to their newspapers. There were about 150 special corre-

spondents in the field representing northern newspapers. These individuals were not recognized as non-combatants; in fact, they were subject to attack and were sometimes attached to officers' staffs as aides, dispatch carriers and signal officers. (4:332) Most of the Civil War correspondents were poorly educated, had little knowledge about the military and frequently fabricated the news sent to their newspapers. (5:4) Newspaper accounts, in turn, were often incorrect, had a demoralizing impact on the civilian population, and often published sensitive military information. (5:4)

Correspondents and newspapers were frequently unpopular with the Federal commanders. At Vicksburg, for example, General William T. Sherman, attributed the success of his forces to "the absence of newspapers . . . ." In addition, after learning that three correspondents had been killed by an exploding shell Sherman replied, "Good! Now we'll have news from hell before breakfast!" (4:357)

Because of the generally irresponsible nature of the press, the Lincoln Administration felt some restrictions on the press were necessary, especially to prevent information from falling into enemy hands. Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his military staff were known to attempt to obtain northern papers for news of Federal troop and sailing movements. (Mott:337) Censorship, originally imposed after the Battle of First Bull Run in July 1861, was not centrally managed and, as a result, it was applied sporadically with little standard of enforcement by military commanders. (4:336) Telegraph lines from Washington were placed under State Department

censorship in April 1861 and information concerning army movements was strictly limited. In August 1861, the War Department issued an order reminding the press of the 57th Article of War which provided for court-martial and possible death sentence for providing military information "either directly or indirectly" to the enemy. The order was generally disregarded; a New York Herald correspondent, however, was courtmartialed and sentenced to six months hard labor for breach. (4:337,338) In February 1862, censorship responsibilities were moved to the War Department under supervision of an assistant secretary, and in the field, correspondents had to clear their copy through a provost marshal before transmission. (6:196) It is interesting to note that General Sherman, Despite his disdain for the press, was responsible for the "accreditation" of journalists--a precedent followed ever since regarding military correspondents. (6:196)

#### The Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War is often referred to as a war started by the American Press, in particular William Randolph Hearst of the New York Journal. Hearst, in reply to his illustrator's request to return home from Havana prior to hostilities, sent a telegram which read, "Please remain. You furnish pictures. I will furnish war." (5:14) Approximately 500 reporters converged on U.S. forces in Cuba and on ships in the Philippines. (6:292) Many in the press chartered boats and followed the navy in action in Havana and Manila Bay. (6:292) American commanders allowed complete freedom to correspondents

to cover the action. Few correspondents attempted to protect their status as noncombatants. In fact, James Creelman of the New York Journal led an attack on a Spanish position at El Clancy and captured the enemy flag as a souvenir for his newspaper. Creelman was wounded shortly thereafter and was attended to by Hearst himself. (4:534) The government unsuccessfully tried to establish censorship procedures through military review of copy in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Florida, and by a press censor in New York. (1:26) The press printed reports of U.S. forces in action and any news and rumors of U.S. plans as could be obtained. (4:536)

#### World War I

During World War I, approximately 40 U.S. correspondents reported on the war. (4:621) Accreditation rules for war correspondents accompanying the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) were demanding. The correspondent had to swear before the Secretary of war or his assistant that he would "convey the truth to the people of the United States" while not revealing information useful to the enemy. The correspondent then had to submit an autobiographical account of his work, experience, character and health, as well as state his intentions once reaching Europe before he would be accredited. (7:124) Correspondents accompanying the AEF were required to file \$2000 bond (given to charity should the correspondent be expelled from the combat zone) and \$1000 maintenance deposit. Recognized correspondents generally had free reign of the battle areas and easy access to army personnel. Unaccredited correspondents were sometimes allowed facilities for observation and reporting.

(4:621) Correspondents did not normally wear uniforms, but were required to wear a green armband with a red "C." (7:124) Reporters filed stories at press headquarters, which was attached to a censor's office, which in turn was part of the military intelligence service. News personnel recognized the need for military security and were generally quite supportive of field censorship and agreed that it was conducted fairly.

(4:622) On the whole reporting of the war was well done. Frank Luther Mott writes, "despite censorship handicaps, and the difficulties placed in the way of field correspondents by all the European military authorities, the American people were better informed of the progress of the war than those of any other country in the world." (4:623)

Back home, the government created the first recorded instances of centralized government-imposed censorship under war conditions. On April 14, 1917, ten days after entering into the war, President Wilson established the Committee on Public Information, whose purpose was to disseminate facts about the war, coordinate government propaganda efforts and serve as government liaison to the newspapers. The CPI also drew up voluntary censorship codes for newspapers to follow in order not to publish information that might aid the enemy. During the war, newspaper editors generally self censored well beyond the CPI's minimum recommendations. (6:356) The CPI gave correspondents access to government news channels and deemed that only news regarding military troop movements, sailings and other events critical to the war effort should be withheld.

Ultimately, the CPI employed 150,000 personnel. (6:357) During its existence, the CPI issued over 6,000 releases which were ". . . on the whole, accurate and full of news value." (6:357, 4:626)

At the same time the CPI was created, President Wilson proclaimed that newspapers publishing information or statements "giving aid or comfort to the enemy" made the publisher liable to prosecution for treason. (4:623) Further, the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917 provided heavy fines and imprisonment for anyone who "shall willfully cause or attempt to cause...disloyalty...or shall willfully obstruct recruiting..." and made publications guilty of such acts unmaillable. Furthermore, the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 16, 1917 authorized censorship of all cable, telephone and telegraph communications out of the United States. The act also required newspapers and magazines containing articles in a foreign language to file a sworn translation with the postmaster. Because of concern of violation of First Amendment Rights, newspapers contested both acts throughout the war. The Espionage Act was upheld by the Supreme Court as constitutional after the war ended. (4:623)

### World War II

Reporting of the Second World War was, according to Frank Luther Mott, the "greatest achievement of the American Press in its history." (4:741) The U.S. War Department accredited 1,186 American correspondents while the Navy accredited 460 more. (4:742) The war claimed 37 killed and 112 wounded, (4:759) Newsmen were considered part of the war effort and some were brought into the most secret areas of government



operations. William L. Laurence of the New York Times for example, was not only given access to the Manhattan Project well before its official disclosure, but even accompanied the B-29 crew that dropped the second atomic bomb. (6:485)

New technologies, such as mobile radio units and audio-tape recordings, made major contributions to war coverage. Four hundred watt mobile shortwave stations mounted on trucks and made field reports possible from such locations as Sicily, Normandy and the Philippines. Radio and cable channels could send 400 words a minute to New York and could even transmit photographs. (4:745) Photographers became a standard part of war correspondence and advances in telephone and radio technology permitted copy and photos to be filed back to the United States. On D-Day for example, ACME Newsphotographer Bert Brandt's photos of the initial Normandy landings were the first to be published in the U.S. and English newspapers. (4:743)

Censorship was quickly instituted at the onset of the war. President Roosevelt created the U.S. Office of Censorship on December 15, 1941 under the War Powers Act. Under this office all international communications entering or leaving the United States by mail cable or radio were reviewed. (4:759) At its peak, the postal section of the Office of Censorship had more than 14,000 employees. (4:763) On June 14, 1942, the Office of War Information was established to "facilitate the development of an informal and intelligent understanding, at home and abroad, of the status and progress of the war effort and of the war policies, activities and aims of the

government." (4:765) The OWI was not related the Office of Censorship. The OWI's main task was to provide news on war operations from government departments to news agencies in the States and abroad. By 1943, the OWI was sending out 65,000 words, 2,500 photos and several shortwave broadcasts daily. (4:766,767) In a separate directive, Roosevelt directed Byron White, Office of Censorship Director to establish a system of voluntary cooperation with U.S. editors and publishers regarding censorship. As a result, A Code of Wartime Practices for the American Press was developed and promulgated in January 1942 and was quickly put into use in American newspapers, magazines, books, and newsletters. (4:761) The code was unique in that it had no statutory basis nor provided any legal penalty for violators. Despite this loophole, the Office of censorship maintained excellent relations with the press throughout the war. As Frank Luther Mott writes, "The voluntary censorship was an extraordinary performance, outstanding in the entire history of our democratic processes." (4:763)

#### The Korean War

Approximately 600 correspondents covered the Korean War, with about 175 to 150 in-theater at any time. (4:857) Coverage was tough and correspondents were required to drive great distances to find telephone lines to call their Tokyo news bureaus (4:851) As Mott points out, press coverage of the war was generally not as good as World War II because it was ". . .costly in lives, suffering and money." (4:856) Seventeen reporters were killed in action. (4:852).

Censorship was "confusing and confused." (4:856)

Although the Department of Defense authorized General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Korea, to impose censorship, he initially declined to do so, calling it "abhorrent" and, instead, asked reporters to voluntarily censor themselves (8:50, 4:856). He warned correspondents, though, who made "unwarranted criticisms" that they would be held personally responsible. (8:50) After the Chinese Communists invaded Korea and drove MacArthur's forces back below the 38th parallel, there was a deluge of correspondent criticism of senior officers in the press. The military in turn became critical of press reporting. For example, General Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur's intelligence chief, was incensed at press criticisms of his failure to discover the Chinese before their invasion and attacked correspondents in a national magazine. (4:856) To make matters worse, correspondents found that definitions of security were so loose, even among army officers, that they could not adequately judge for themselves what was safe to report. This lack of guidance compounded the competitive pressure among the reporters to disclose more information than rival correspondents. As a result there was a groundswell of reporter opinion--90 percent by one estimate--that favored World War II style censorship. Some reporters also wanted to reduce the consequences of competition among themselves. (8:54) To resolve the deteriorating military-media relationship, Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall met with senior press representatives and together adopt-

ed a resolution declaring "the security of information from the combat area is the responsibility of the military." (8:54) As a result, censorship was imposed in late December 1950. All field press reports, radio broadcasts, magazine articles and photographs had to be cleared for transmission at the Korean point of dispatch (through the army press advisory division under military intelligence), at the Tokyo point of receipt and at the point of transmission abroad. Violators were subject to prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, although none were ever tried. (4:854) By June 1951, censorship restrictions were eased requiring scrutiny only at the Korean point of transmission and by the end of 1952, army public affairs took over censorship duties from the intelligence branch. (4:854)

A 1966 House Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Government Information Report found that the military press relationship worked fairly well in Korea, despite the administrative difficulties in moving from voluntary to compulsory censorship. The report noted that Korean War censors used only two criteria: (1) would release of information provide aid and comfort to the enemy?, and (2) would release adversely affect the morale of troops fighting in Korea? (8:59,60) In addition, the report found that the majority of correspondents and editors covering the conflict were responsibly fulfilling the intent of the censorship program. (8:60)

In retrospect, the Korean Armistice may be considered the end of a somewhat strained but mutually beneficial military-media relationship which successfully reported U.S.

military actions and maintained military operational security during three wars. In later years, and in other conflicts, the relationship would change for the worse.

## CHAPTER III

### VIETNAM AND GRENADA--A CHANGE IN THE MILITARY AND MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

Well I know how to stop those press boats. We've been shooting at them. We haven't sunk any yet, but how are we to know who's on them? (9:1)

--Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf, III,  
Commander, Grenada Task Force

In contrast to World War I, World War II and Korea during which the military and press cooperated, the Vietnam War and the and Grenada invasion fundamentally changed the nature of the military-media relationship.

#### Vietnam

Coverage of the Vietnam War was different from three perspectives. First, improved communications technology provided a near real-time reporting of the war. Second, there was no formal censorship program. Third, the relationship between the press and the military changed for the worse.

By the beginning of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, commercial television was rapidly expanding in the United States, as was the use of portable film and sound recording systems for visual news. The use of television provided an added dimension to the traditional print and in later years, still photographic, motion picture and radio means of mass communication.

In 1964, with the increasing involvement of U.S. forces in Vietnam, there were 20 American and foreign correspondents in the country. By the height of U.S. involvement in 1968, there were 637 correspondents. (10:109) Unlike previous wars, correspondents shared the military's relatively comfortable rear area facilities which included post exchanges, clubs, and swimming pools. In addition, reporters had virtual reserved seating on military flights anywhere in-country. (8:64)

Also unlike the World wars and Korea, senior government officials ruled out censorship because: (1) it was not feasible, as reporters could travel from Vietnam to Hong Kong or other cities to file stories and thus avoid censorship; (2) since no war was declared, there was no censorship in the U.S.; (3) the host South Vietnamese government, already having established unpopular dealings with their own press, would have a say in any censorship; (4) there was a lack of technical facilities to censor television film; and (5) the difficulty of censoring a war which had long been covered without censorship. (B:66) Instead, reporters were issued guidelines for reporting which banned the following: (1) casualty reports and unit identification related to specific actions except in general terms such as "light, moderate or heavy,"; (2) troop movements or deployments until released by authority of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV); (3) identification of units participating in battles. (8:66)

Peter Braestrup notes that the unlike World War II and Korea, the relationship between correspondents and the military

was in Vietnam was "contaminated by U.S. domestic politics."  
(8:63) He argues the military was placed under political pressure to make things better than they actually were--and the press was aware of this. As a result he notes that most print reporters did not take the daily official communique briefings (termed the "five o'clock follies" by many) from Military Assistance Command-Vietnam (MACV) Headquarters in Saigon very seriously. Braestrup writes

That the follies often turned into a spokesman-baiting exercise was less a matter of keen-eyed journalists challenging official "lies" or claims of "progress" than of venting the journalists' underlying frustrations over their inability to answer independently the question from the home office: "Are we winning or losing the war?" Thanks to years of official optimism, (notably from Defense Secretary McNamara) that proved unfounded, newsmen in Saigon were inclined to discount all optimistic assessments by official spokesmen, even as they dutifully reported them. (8:65)

At the same time, military personnel found the reporting from Vietnam irritating and claimed it was not truly representative of the war effort. For example, Alan Hooper observes the media "misled" the American people about the 1968 Tet Offensive--reporting it as a defeat, when in fact it was a U.S. military victory. (10:113) Braestrup suggests that the media were simply not prepared to report the war because they were largely ignorant of Vietnam, its people and language; were unfamiliar with the American military; and failed to remain with the troops in the field and experience combat firsthand. He writes that

Reporters and photographers were plunged alongside of uniformed strangers in a remote, often dangerous locale



for a brief time and then whisked away, often with 'good film' but without any notion of either why the fight started or its 'before' or 'after.' (10: 113,114)

The problems of accurate reporting were further compounded by the use of television in war reporting and its impact back home. In 1966, CBS correspondent Morley Safer wrote:

This is television's first war. It is only in the past few years that the medium has become portable enough to go out on military operations. And this has raised some serious problems--problems, incidentally, which every network correspondent and cameraman in Vietnam is acutely aware of.

The camera can describe in excruciating, harrowing detail what war is all about. The cry of pain, the shattered face--it's all there on film, and out it goes into millions of American home during the dinner hour.

. . . the unfavorable has always been reported along with the favorable--but television tells it with greater impact. When the U.S. blunders, television leaves little doubt. (8:67)

The impression left by newspaper and television reportage in the minds of many senior officers was that the press was "not on the team." As Braestrup notes, "there is no question that televised coverage of Vietnam lingers large in the minds of senior military officers. Their perceptions of press and television performance have been transmitted down the line to junior officers." (8:69) After the war, General Douglas Kinard's survey of 100 generals who served in command positions in Vietnam found that 51 percent of those surveyed found newspaper reportage as uneven, with some good, but many irresponsible while 38 percent thought coverage to be "irresponsible and disruptive of US efforts in Vietnam." (8:70) Regarding television coverage, 39 percent thought it was "probably not a good thing because coverage tends to be out of context," while 52

percent said it was "not a good thing, since there was a tendency to go for the sensational, which was counterproductive to the war effort." (8:70)

The United States' experience in Vietnam was a watershed. Braestrup concludes that "No U.S. conflict since the Civil War was to stir so much hostility among the military toward the media as the drawn-out conflict in Vietnam." (8:61)

#### Grenada

On October 25, 1983, ten years after the Vietnam War ended for the United States, American forces invaded the island of Grenada. For perhaps the first time in U.S. military history, the press was purposely excluded from the initial action. Braestrup notes that

By all accounts exclusion was the express wish of General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And it was contained in the hastily drafted operations plan . . . approved by the Joint Chiefs, which called for the exclusion of the press during the initial fighting, which was expected to last for one day.

Resentment over perceived anti-military bias in the military, particularly television, during the Vietnam War and the success of the British in controlling press access to the fighting in the Falklands in 1982 loomed large in military thinking. (8:90)

Apparently, the U.S. high command believed that press coverage would be detrimental to the effort. Admiral McDonald wrote in his after-action URGENT FURY report:

The absolute need to maintain the greatest element of surprise in executing the mission to ensure minimum danger to U.S. hostages on the island and to the servicemen involved in the initial assault dictated that the press be restricted until the initial objectives had been secured. (8:90)

There were no arrangements made to take the press to Grenada. As a direct result, there was no media plan at all and it wasn't until October 27th, two days after the invasion that DOD established a joint information bureau on the island of Barbados and escorted correspondents to Grenada.

The exclusion of the press from the initial days of the Grenada invasion prompted a heated debate among members of the media and Congress as to the "constitutionality" of the government's actions. Members of the media argued that the exclusion of journalists was "unprecedented and intolerable." (9:932) Sam Donaldson of ABC News called the press restriction, "a deliberate effort. . . to mislead the press, not because of secrecy of a military operation but because of a need they feel to protect the political hide of the president." (8:113) Howard Simon of The Washington Post said "I don't know in my 30 years as a journalist of a single military operation in the world that was jeopardized by a news report." (8:113) The American Society of Newspaper Editors said the restrictions went, "beyond the normal limits of military censorship." (8:115) Dan Rather of CBS stated

In this country there is a long tradition . . . that puts the press in the battlefield so citizens at home can find out from independent reporters what's happening. But the men with stars on their shoulders who called the shots on Grenada decided, "Who cares about the press?" Which is another way of saying, "Who cares what the public knows?" (8:115)

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), a member of the Armed Services Committee, stated that "the administration's policy of censorship about events in Grenada is unprecedented, seemingly unjustified, and probably unconstitutional. . . ." (8:117) In

addition, eight members of Congress even introduced a resolution to impeach President Reagan, alleging that he had violated the First Amendment. (9:932)

Were the press and members of Congress justified in their remarks or did the government have a "right" to exclude journalists from the invasion? If so, what does that portend for future military operations? In attempting to answer these questions, it would be helpful to review appropriate legal precedents and cases which bear on the issues of the "public's right to know," the government's right to withhold information, and press access to information.

## CHAPTER IV

### A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE OF PRESS AND GOVERNMENT RIGHTS AND THE IMPACT ON PRESS COVERAGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

The Constitution itself is neither a Freedom of Information nor an Official Secrets Act. (11:150)

--Justice Potter Stewart

The United States Constitution guarantees the right to a free press, although an exact definition of what is and what is not implicit in that right may never be fully determined. This chapter examines key legal issues governing freedom of the press and the government's right to protect military information.

#### Whose Right to Know?

Although the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right of a free press, nowhere does it recognize the concept of the public's right to know. The period since the end of world War II has seen a great deal of press advocacy and litigation targeted toward establishing the right to know as implicit in the First Amendment. For example, on July 12, 1957, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), proclaimed the public's right to know in a declaration of principles. (11:1) However, whether or not the public has a right to know has not been determined by the cause of the "vexatious problems (which) remain in

[which] vice  
(which)

the scope of the first Amendment." (11:2) In 1956, James R. Wiggins, executive editor of The Washington Post and chairman of the Committee on Freedom of Information of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, argued that the public's right to know referred to several different although related rights. These were: 1) the right to gather information; 2) the right to print without prior restraint; 3) the right to print without fear of reprisal not under due process; 4) the right of access to facilities and material essential to communication; and 5) the right to distribute information without interference by government acting under law or by citizens acting in defiance of the law. (11:3)

Richard M. O'Brien notes that these rights are "disparate and not equally meritorious in their legal and political justifications," and that while the right to print and distribute information without prior restraint in most cases "may prove defensible under the First Amendment, the 'right to information' and the 'right of access' do not appear to have a constitutional basis." (11:3) O'Brien further observes that "The public's right to know engenders political controversy because claims to a right to know appear unconditional, unqualified and unacceptable." (11:3) In deciding First Amendment cases since the 1930s, the Supreme Court has shown neither total restraint nor activism, but has instead shown "modest interventionism" which means that, while the Court has enlarged First Amendment freedoms, and has supported the freedoms of speech and press, it has not used the constitution to force government openness. (11:3) In sum, the degree of the First

Amendment's protection for the public's right to know is still being developed.

### Prior Restraints

Laws barring the publication of certain information are considered to be prior restraints and the Supreme Court has largely held against such acts. (11:152) O'Brien observes that prior governmental restraints on information dissemination are subject to "exacting judicial scrutiny" because, as Justice Harry Blackmun observed, "a free society prefers to punish the few who abuse rights of speech after they break the law than to throttle them and all others beforehand." (11:152) Hence, although there is a Court "presumption" against prior restraints, it does not necessarily follow that prior restraints are unconstitutional per se. (11:152) In reviewing prior restraint cases, the Court has sought to protect essential First Amendment rights while observing the separation of powers and "reasonable legislative or executive branch determinations that enhance the free flow of information." (11:153) In Near Vs. Minnesota, for example, the Court held that protection from prior restraints is not absolutely limited and noted certain exceptions to the policy of prohibiting prior restraints.

There may be certain important exceptions to prior restraint doctrine concerning censorship. For example, agreements signed by reporters authorizing military review of their copy for pre-publication clearance, may constitute enforceable prior restraint. Such agreements could well be upheld under the Court's decision in Snepp Vs. the United States. (9:951)

Snepp sought to publish a book containing sensitive information which he had access to while employed by the CIA. The Supreme Court denied his First Amendment challenge and upheld a lifetime pre-publication agreement which he had signed as a condition of employment. (9:951) The Court ruled that "the government has a compelling interest in protecting both the secrecy of information important to our national security and the appearance of confidentiality so essential to the effective operation of our foreign intelligence service." (9:951) The difference between Snepp's pre-publication agreement and those signed by military correspondents is that Snepp signed as a condition of employment, while military correspondents do not. Paul Cassell argues that the difference is irrelevant because, just as Snepp was denied due to his "trust relationship" with the CIA, military correspondents who become privy to sensitive military information enter the same trust relationship with the government. (9:951)

#### The Government's Right to Withhold Information

Also in Near, the Court upheld the government's right to withhold information pertaining to national security, where Chief Justice Hughes stated that "no one would question but that a government might prevent actual obstruction to its recruiting service or the publication of sailing dates of transports or the number and location of troops." (9:940) As importantly, the Court

Indicated that the (First) amendment also does not guarantee exculpability for disseminating information that endangers national security interests. More significant . . . is Near's suggestion that matters relating to national security and national



defense--matters clearly political and of interest to an informed public and electorate--might be susceptible to prior restraints. (11:154)

In effect, this decision recognizes the government's authority to impose censorship for national security reasons.

#### The Press' Right of Access to Information

Regarding press access to information, the record is fairly well defined. For example, in the matter of Richmond Newspapers, Inc. Vs. Virginia in 1982, the Supreme Court held that the press could not be excluded from covering a criminal trial and stated the "First Amendment goes beyond protection of the press and the self-expression of individuals to prohibit government from limiting the stock of information from which members of the public may draw." Further, the Court held that "an arbitrary interference with access to important information is an abridgement of the freedoms of speech and of the press protected by the First Amendment." (8:127,128) The key point regarding press access to military operations may be found in the concluding Court statement which noted that "the right of access to places traditionally open to the public, as criminal trials have long been, may be seen as assured by the amalgam of the First Amendment guarantees of speech and press." (8:129) The question then arises, is combat a place traditionally open to the public?

In answering this question, precedents show that the Supreme Court has barred reporters where the public has generally not had the right of access. In 1974 the Supreme Court, in Saxbe Vs. The Washington Post Co., upheld by a 5-to-4 margin a prison regulation limiting press access to prison inmates as

constitutional. The Court noted that "the Constitution does not require government to accord the press special access to information not shared by the public generally." (8:129) Therefore, although the press has a right to speak and publish, it does not have the unrestrained right to gather information. (8:129) Further, in Gannett Co. Vs. Pasquale, 1979, the Court also limited press access to government activities as the Court held that the press could be barred from a pretrial hearing on a motion to suppress prejudicial evidence. The ruling was based on the temporary nature of the restriction and that a transcript of the hearing would be released, fulfilling the public's right to know. (8:130) As Paul Cassell notes, "the Supreme Court has yet to state a definitive test for invoking the right of access." (9:956)

Finally, the Court in Greer Vs. Spock (1976), held that military installations are not considered to be public fora for exercising First Amendment rights, and that a military commander may limit or deny access to the installation. (12)

#### Application of Case Law to Military Operations

Based on legal precedents, Cassell sees only a very narrow right of access for the press in covering military operations--one that is potentially applicable when three conditions are met:

First, a claimant must show that the place desired for access "historically had been open to the press and general public. Second the right of access must "play a particularly significant role" in the functioning of the process in question and of the government as a whole. Finally, if these two elements have been satisfied, access may be denied if the government establishes that "the denial is

necessitated by a compelling government interest, and is narrowly tailored to serve that interest." (9:958,959)

Cassell further notes that those seeking access to military operations will have trouble in meeting all of the three conditions as military operations have traditionally not been open to the public, battlefield access has been limited to accredited members of the press, and that even accredited members, on occasion, have been denied access to certain areas and have been the subjects of military censorship. Thus, he concludes, there is no tradition of public openness regarding military operations. (9:959)

Traditionally, the Supreme Court's decisions regarding the press' right of access also frequently conflict with the Constitution's Article II powers given the President in conducting foreign and military affairs. In conflicts between national security and freedom of the press issues, the Court has usually found in favor of the President under Article II. (8:130) At times, however, freedom of the press issues have prevailed over Article II powers as in New York Times Vs. United States, perhaps better known as the Pentagon Papers case. The case concerned the government's attempt to restrain publication of military documents relating to U.S. involvement in Vietnam on grounds that publication would constitute a danger to the United States. The Court's decision found that the right of the press to publish the secret military historical papers outweighed the potential harm to U.S. national security. (8:130) In addition to Vietnam and Grenada, many have viewed the Pentagon Papers case as major milestone in the

changing relationship between the press and the government.

Are there implications in this change in relationship regarding censorship?

## CHAPTER V

### THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE PRESS AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

These days, in the adversary journalism that's been developed, it seems as though the reporters are always against us. And when you are trying to conduct a military operation, you don't need that. (8:133)

--George Schultz, U.S. Secretary of State

The Pentagon Papers Case, the Vietnam War and Grenada invasion were major milestones in the changing relationship of the news media and the government. Similarly, the changing nature of the press and its use of high technology communications has significantly influenced traditional means of reporting. This chapter will examine how both might effect reporting of future U.S. military operations.

#### The Changing Press

Robert M. O'Brien notes that the change in press and government relations epitomizes both the institutional independence of the press and a growing opposition to bureaucratic secrecy after World War II. (11:157) Since Korea and Vietnam, O'Brien claims that the press has increasingly criticized both government agencies for withholding too much information and the executive classification system originally established under President Truman. (11:155) Further, O'Brien argues that The Washington Post's publication of the Pentagon Papers

"reflects both the institutional independence of the press and the perception of the political role of the press as a guardian of the public's right to know." (11:152) This attitude of independence is also reflected in the following statement made by Neil Sheehan, a journalist, involved in The New York Times' publication of the Pentagon Papers

The press does not belong on anybody's team. If the press is to be of any use to itself and to the country, it must ruthlessly avoid partnership with any government, any institution, or any political party. The press must guard its independence with the utmost vigilance. The press must be a state unto itself. It must not just call itself the fourth estate, it must behave like a fourth estate. Partnership, membership on the team, does not produce news that informs, it produces cant and propaganda that confuses the mind. (13:5)

In addition to its independence, Hamid Mowlana writes that the media are increasingly adhering to what he terms as a an ever increasing "false concept of objectivity" which he claims "causes the media to perceive themselves as operating outside society, eschewing all responsibility for what takes place within it." (14:71) Moreover, former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger noted that the press' increased penchant for objectivity compounded by its increasing skepticism of the government position is presenting a problem in coverage of military matters

We have seen a disturbing trend in recent years which was alluded to by Vincent Royster, the former editor of The Wall Street Journal, when he noted that there was a time when the press did not consider government as the enemy. Those may be strong words, but at the very least they reflect a trend toward viewing the government's portion on anything as suspect.

Even in combat, the media wants to decide for itself whether the fight is just. They want to interview the enemy, give equal time to the enemy, weigh the enemy's arguments against ours, and report the enemy's

point of view to the American people. This situation results, to a large degree from many members of the media feeling that they are judges and owe a degree of impartiality to the enemy. (15:4,5)

In addition, Michael Burch, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, agrees with Weinberger

(In World War II) there was an attitude of support then for our men in uniform--not only would no journalist dream of jeopardizing security and safety, but Edward R. Murrow would not have considered crossing over to the other side to interview a panzer tank commander. (16:5)

#### Communications Technology

A look at the press and military censorship today must also take into account the technology that has revolutionized the way the press does business. Majid Tehranian writes that the convergence of six technologies: printing, broadcasting, point-to-point telecommunications, computers, satellites and microprocessors into a single technological revolution has been characterized as a second industrial revolution. (14:46) He also notes that the ever-increasing process of miniaturization, mass production and consumption of information and communication goods have led many to call it the "age of information." (14:46) The impact of this has been profound, not only on the press's ability to cover stories with literal immediacy from almost anywhere on earth, but on the press's role in conflict situations. Andrew Arno observes that

Dramatic advances in communications technology are resulting in wider and faster dissemination of news, with a related growth in the potential of worlds and national public opinion as a political force. The media, in fact acting through ephemeral, intermittent, but explosively powerful coming together of news sources, print or broadcast organizations, and both mass and specialized audiences, are partially autonomous parties to the relationships in which conflict situations exist. (14:1)

Television in particular has been revolutionized by technology. Peter Braestrup notes that "technology has changed the whole approach to television's overseas coverage." (8:103) Modern television cameras and satellite ground stations enable live video pictures to be transmitted virtually anywhere in the world. J. Morgan Smith claims that the speed and coverage of communications has serious implications for national security

The areas in which government secrecy tend to be most publicly suspect, the hardest to preserve, and the most difficult to protect by enforceable statutes are those in which the governments' right and need for secrecy have the greatest degree of traditional support. These areas include military matters, diplomacy, and intelligence. Because of satellite communications and the speed of modern communications, it is impossible to report any information to the American public without that information being known almost simultaneously to every interested government around the world." (17:82)

Admiral Brent Baker believes that portable satellite transmission capability has a definite security impact on military operations. He cites the instance when a Cable News Network and other broadcast media-chartered C-130 delivered a satellite ground terminal to Barbados during the Grenada invasion--its ultimate purpose to broadcast from Grenada. "Thus," he writes, "a new dimension of direct international broadcast from an earth satellite station on or near the battlefield poses a security problem with live or almost live battlefield broadcasts." (18:76) Michael Burch asks

How does a modern military commander deal with things like network satellite earth stations that can send live pictures from behind his lines? Even the billions of dollars we spend each year on intelligence systems wouldn't give us that capability, yet an unrestrained network would give that capability to the Soviets for free." (16:5)



Given the tremendous strain on military-media relationships from Vietnam and Grenada, the news media's penchant for independence, skepticism and objectivity, and revolutionary improvements in press technology, can the government and the media cooperate in protecting military operational security while simultaneously meeting public information demands regarding the employment of U.S. forces? Perhaps recent attempts to improve the military-media relationship hold the answer.

## CHAPTER VI

### ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE THE MILITARY AND MEDIA RELATIONSHIP

The appropriate media role in relation to the government has been summarized aptly of neither being a lap dog nor an attack dog, but rather a watch dog. Mutual antagonism and distrust are not in the best interest of the media, the military or the American People. (26:32)

#### --The Sidle Commission Report

As seen thus far, the Vietnam War, the Pentagon Papers Case and the Grenada invasion were instrumental in changing the nature of the military-media relationship. Fortunately, representatives from both establishments have undertaken efforts to promote mutual understanding and support.

#### The Sidle Commission

On November 4, 1983, in reaction to press criticisms of the Grenada invasion, General Vessey announced that a commission headed by retired army general Winant Sidle, former chief of military information in Vietnam 1967-69, would establish guidelines for press coverage of future military employments. The commission consisted of Sidle, six military officers and seven former reporters and news executives. The press provided inputs but had no members serve on the commission. (8:124)

Released on August 23, 1984, Sidle's report offered the following eight basic recommendations:

Public affairs planning should be made concurrently with the operational planning; if a media pool is the only way to provide media access to a military operations, the pool should be the largest possible and maintained only as long as necessary; the Secretary of Defense should consider and decide whether to prepare a ready list of accredited reporters to use in case a pool is required; media access should depend on the media's voluntary compliance with security guidelines; public affairs planning should include sufficient equipment and personnel to assist correspondents; planners should strive to accommodate journalists at the earliest time possible without interfering with combat operations; planners should attempt to include "intra- and inter-theater transportation" for media personnel; and finally, the members of military public affairs and news organizations should meet to discuss their differences. (8:125)

The panel also suggested that the Secretary of Defense meet with representatives from the broadcast media to discuss the problems arising from press access and the need for military security. (8:125)

#### Department of Defense Media Pools

On the heels of the Sidle Commission report, in October 1984, Department of Defense officials and representatives of the print and broadcast media recommended a 12-member press pool be established, consisting of a reporter each from the Associated Press and United Press International; one newsperson each from ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN; a camera operator and sound technician shared by all four networks; a photographer, a radio broadcaster, a daily newspaper writer and a magazine writer. (8:125)

To date the pools have been deployed eleven times to cover training deployments and the employment of U.S. forces such as in the Persian Gulf (EARNEST WILL) and in Panama (JUST CAUSE). The pools are making a difference. Barry Willey

writes that since Grenada, military-media relations "have improved significantly in terms of cooperation and understanding." (19:76)

Pool procedures are straightforward. First, prior to any deployment, members are instructed not to tell anyone that the pool has been activated. Second, pool members may not file stories or otherwise attempt to communicate with any individual about the operation until stories and all other information (videotape, still photos, cutlines, etc.) have been shared with other pool members. Third, pool members must remain with their escort officer at all times until released. (19:1)

The rules for 1987-88 pool deployments to the Persian Gulf were somewhat stricter. In this instance, where pool members had the potential to (and would later) observe actual combat, members agreed in advance to accept security review of pool material at the source prior to release to any media. (19:77) Pool material was normally transmitted over the ships' communications system after review, although some sea pickup by land-based helicopter for transmission over commercial satellite ground stations was accomplished. (19:79) The Persian Gulf pool results were excellent. For example, a April 12-22, 1988 pool traveled over 2,000 miles, and produced 14 print reports, 600 minutes of videotape, and 18 rolls of still film--an output which pool members called "awesome." (19:82) Willey observes that the reason for the success of this particular pool was the close interaction between the pool members and their military escorts, answering questions in a timely manner, keeping each pool member abreast of activities, and by

"assuring pool members that the military was looking out for their interests, both professionally and personally." (19:82)

Are Department of Defense media pools the best way to keep the public informed and maintain military operational security? Perhaps the British experience in the 1982 Falkland Islands Campaign offers a model for future military-media relations in U.S. force employments.

## CHAPTER VII

### THATCHER GOVERNMENT CENSORSHIP OF THE BRITISH MEDIA DURING THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CAMPAIGN

The merit of a good general is to impart the good news  
and conceal the bad. (12:7)

--Sophocles, 496-406 B.C.

For the British, the 1982 Falklands Campaign did not fit the classicly contemplated "next war" in Europe for which their forces were best prepared to fight. Just as the nation was caught off guard by the Argentine invasion of the Falklands on April 2, 1982, the British Ministry of Defense was equally unprepared to handle the media coverage that the British military response would engender. The battle, fought 8,000 miles from Britain in a remote part of the world and far from established lines of communication, presented unique problems to the government's need to maintain operational security, and to the media's desire to report the story.

#### Media Relations

Because of the distance and remoteness of the Falklands, the media were totally dependent on the British task force for transportation. The Royal Navy allotted six press positions to accompany the ships and troops. Due to political pressure on the government, this number ultimately reached 29 by the time the task force sailed on April 5. Selection of the

initial six press representatives was done by the Ministry of Defense, however all 29 were ultimately done by ballot by the Newspaper Publishers Association. (20:xxii) Due to the short notification time, the press was forced to send representatives from whomever was available rather than choose their most experienced war reporters. (20:xxii) Because no current procedures existed, reporters were accredited using documents left over from the Suez operation in 1956. (20:xxiii) Due to the speed of departure, reporters were barely prepared to join the task force which sailed April 5th.

In London, the Ministry of Defense established several means of accommodating media interest. An emergency 24 hour press center was established on May 2nd and operated for the duration of the conflict. (20:xxviii) On May 18th, a news release group was established under the assistant undersecretary of defense staff and included senior representatives of the public relations and operations staff. They, in turn, coordinated with Fleet Headquarters on the release of operational information. As operations in the Falklands grew more intense, the Ministry of Defense made considerable effort to sustain the flow of factual information. (20:xxviii) Ministry of Defense officials and editors agreed to cooperate on matters of security. The permanent secretary met with representatives of the British press and broadcasting and chaired background briefings for British defense correspondents, the regional British press and foreign journalists. (20:xxviii)

### Censorship Procedures

A limited form of censorship was accomplished during the campaign. In return for passage, correspondents accepted Ministry of Defense ground rules which stated that reporting of any information which could damage the task force or be of assistance to the Argentines would be deleted. Task force commanders were instructed that their first priority was security, were given authority to prevent dispatch of copy, but were told that the "public should be kept informed." (20:xxiv) Reporters had to submit all material concerning the task force for censorship and were cautioned to not to speculate, and not to divulge operations or readiness states. (20:xxiv) Correspondents were assured the tone of articles would not be interfered with as long as the supporting facts were deemed accurate by the reviewing authorities. (21:1) Despite these precautions, however, personal letters and telephone calls from embarked servicemen were not censored. (21:xxiv)

To assist the press effort, the Ministry of Defense sent six public relations officers (PROs), most of whom were lower grade civilians, to work with press representatives and task force officers. By and large, they were inexperienced former journalists and none had worked as a reporter. (21:1) The PROs, also known as "minders," were also charged with reviewing press copy aboard ship prior to transmission.

Embarked journalists were dependent on task force ships for communication back to London. Written dispatches were sent over military communication systems along with military traffic where ships officers determined the relative priority of the



journalists' copy. Voice reports were sent from task force ships having Commercial Maritime Satellite (Inmarsat) capabilities directly back to British Broadcasting Corporation headquarters in London where broadcasting pool and Ministry of Defense representatives listened to them upon arrival. (21:2) Since none of the task force warships had the Inmarsat capability, journalists on those vessels were forced to transfer between ships to file their reports. It was initially possible to transmit video from the correspondents' electronic news gathering video cameras, but as the task force sailed further south, picture transmission capability was lost altogether. Still photographs were sent from the task force by means of four picture transmission machines on one ship and were used with the Inmarsat capability. Two hundred and two photographs were transmitted by service and press personnel during the campaign. (20:xxv) Censorship was also imposed upon receipt at the Ministry of Defense in London where a clearance staff of three officers working on a shift system passed cleared copy on a pool basis to British media. (20:1)

Although the task force censors in the Falklands area attempted to delete potentially compromising information, it became apparent to the Ministry of Defence in London that some task force-approved copy, if passed directly to the press might have operational security implications for the government's overall operation. As a result, from May 21st on, the Ministry of Defence's Defense Public Relations (DPRS) staff reviewed all task force-censored copy and shortstopped inadequate censor-

ship, clearing it prior to delivery to the press. Questionable material was normally resolved in less than one hour.

Throughout the campaign, the Ministry of Defense was generally satisfied that the press and media observed the proper clearance procedures. (20:xxix) Throughout the campaign, the Ministry of Defence was generally satisfied that the press and media observed the proper clearance procedures. (20:xxix)

#### Government and Media Reaction

Coverage of the Falklands campaign frequently angered the government and media alike. The government, for example, criticized the BBC for giving equal credence to Ministry of Defense and Argentine reporting. Prime Minister Thatcher called early BBC reporting of events "unbalanced and irresponsible." (20:viii) Furthermore, many felt that British media were not supporting the country's war effort. Valerie Adams writes that many had the impression that the media were taking a position "above and outside of events." For example, she cites English broadcaster Peter Snow's comments on British Government reporting of events on the May 2nd, 1982 broadcast of the television program "Newsnight," where he stated "until the British are demonstrated either to be deceiving us or to be concealing losses from us, we can only tend to give a lot more credence to the British version of events." (22:182) Moreover, many in the Ministry of Defence were highly critical of the media's use of retired service officers to comment on potential moves of the task force enroute and once ashore in the Falklands, fearing the Argentines would gain insight into British operational methodology. (22:155)

The news media, on the other hand, were upset over government information policies, an inadequate number of places for journalists accompanying the task force and the means by which journalists were selected to go. Ministry of Defence non-attribution briefings were stopped on May 11th, prior to landings in the Falklands, leaving the media for the most part to rely on narrow, imprecise official statements from the Ministry for reporting purposes. Valerie Adams notes that because of a lack of information and the press' need to "fill space," significant media speculation occurred which became a problem confronting government security in that it might inadvertently provide the Argentines with information having intelligence value. (22:149-155) The media also accused the Ministry of Defence of manipulating the news, however the House of Commons Defence Committee Report later found that while the government had not directly misled the media, it nonetheless had on occasion used the media to disinform the Argentines about British knowledge of Argentine military activity and capability, or to prevent information valuable to the Argentines, such as the loss of two Harriers on May 6, 1982 from becoming known to them. (20:xlirii). Finally, the media were angered by the inconsistent censorship of correspondents reports in the field by the PROs.

#### Lessons Learned

The British House of Commons Defence Committee Inquiry into the handling of press and public information during the Falkland Islands Campaign found that the basic goals of war

information policy were accomplished. These goals included: no breaches of security, arrangements for the media to accompany the task force and report on operations; and satisfying the public's desire for information. (20:lix) Although there were inconsistencies in release of information regarding military actions, information was usually released as soon as it was confirmed and the accuracy of Ministry of Defence releases was not seriously challenged. As a result, the credibility of the British Government spokesmen was maintained. (20:lii)

Despite the overall success, the House of Commons Defence Committee noted several problem areas in the Ministry of Defence's planning and execution of media support. Key among these were:

The lack of an experienced public affairs officer at the head of the Ministry of Defence PR organization was widely felt in the Ministry's response to the need to make arrangements for media coverage of the Falklands campaign.

In drawing up contingency plans for public relations in any future conflict the Ministry of Defence will need to take careful notice of media criticisms of the Falklands arrangements . . . and to give special attention in consultation with the media to the problems of accreditation. If a limit has to be placed on the number of correspondents reporting a future conflict, it should be the media's responsibility to select who should go and to decide upon possible pooling arrangements.

The majority of civilian PROs with the Task Force were too junior to discharge effectively the responsibilities placed on them . . . .

The Ministry of Defence's decision to halt off-the-record briefings for most of the conflict was probably the wrong one . . . . In a time of difficulty, except in the most special circumstances, briefings at all levels should be maintained.

A far greater understanding of the nature of media work is necessary within the armed services. Media studies should form a more integral part of higher defence training.

It would be foolish for future plans for incorporating the media into the organisation for war to be too firmly tied to a particular environment . . . but it is clear that information matters are an intrinsic part of war and should therefore for part of the planning for war.

The Government was generally successful in the information war but not all adversaries will be overcome as convincingly. Military action should always be an extension of diplomacy; information policy should recognize this to the fullest extent. (20:lix-lxi)

Having reviewed the elements of Thatcher Government censorship of the British media in the Falkland Islands Campaign, with the attendant problems and lessons learned, what can it offer as a model for the United States Government to use in future force employments?

## CHAPTER VIII

### ANALYSIS: APPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

To allow the media total and unrestricted access to all facets of military operations is to risk losing a war, and yet to deny access is the act of a totalitarian regime. Clearly a compromise is required, but in electing to pursue this course of action the military and the government clearly place democracy itself at risk--it could be said that democracy is placed in the balance.  
(23:4)

--P.J. Fitzpatrick

Based on the information presented in this study, the overall success of Thatcher Government censorship in the Falkland Islands Campaign may have more application for the United States government in remote, low intensity conflicts than in large-scale wars.

#### Remote, Low Intensity Conflicts

The Falklands example may be a useful model for U.S. Government censorship where the remoteness of a deployment out of the range of commercial communications and transportation requires the media to rely solely on the military forces for transport, logistics, sustainment, communication, and access to the battlefield and military personnel. Recent U.S. military deployments to Honduras, the Persian Gulf and Panama have provided Department of Defense media pools with this type of support. The Falklands Campaign, however, was unique in several respects, as it was of limited duration, fought in a highly

remote area of the world against a single enemy, involved no allies directly, control over correspondents and communication was virtually total, no foreign press were present and few reports were available from the enemy side. (20:liii) It is impossible to predict if the United States will enjoy the same favorable conditions in future limited employments. As the British Ministry of Defence Chief of Public relations, Mr. Neville Taylor, stated after the Falklands Campaign, "probably never again will the Ministry of Defence be able to control all means of transport to the scene of fighting and the sole means of communication for both copy and pictures." (20:liii)

#### Major War

Using the Falklands case for U.S. Government censorship in a major war in Central Europe, for example, is problematic. In such a war the U.S. would have to contend with significant and well-established foreign national press and U.S. overseas media bureaus, all having an excellent capability to transmit voice and video reports worldwide. Such capability and infrastructure would enable the media to report much of the war, even without direct access to key U.S. military leaders, press conferences or briefings.

Allied nation censorship policies are also of concern. It is by no means certain the United States and its NATO allies will be able to reach agreement on censorship procedures during wartime. The Beach Report, completed following the Falklands Campaign by members of the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the media, dealt with the question of the foreign press reporting of British diplomatic and military activities

during the campaign with an eye toward reporting of same in future wars. The report recommended consultation within NATO "about the type of information to be protected and for firm direction on military information policy," while noting that there could be "no guarantee that the alliance partners would all adopt the same measures." (22:179)

The Thatcher Government-British media Falklands experience also offers the United States several censorship-related areas to consider in planning for media coverage of future military operations. These areas concern operational security, disinformation and misinformation, public opinion, government propaganda and the military-media relationship.

#### Operational Security

Operational security seeks to keep the enemy confused as to military intentions and capabilities. The House of Commons Defence Committee Report observed that, in general, the deployed reporters covering the Falklands Campaign regarded the operational security and safety of British forces as paramount and were determined not to put the success of the effort at risk. (22:159) As seen earlier in Chapter V, there are those who doubt if operational security can be maintained in a world where events are reported through sophisticated and immediate modern communications. Conversely, it is probable that few doubt that operational security remains vital for successful military operations. At the same time it is well established in the United States that the people have some right to know about their military forces. How can military secrecy require-



ments and the public's right to know about the actions of its military be reconciled?

The House of Commons Defence Committee noted that the public's right to information and the government's duty to withhold information for reasons of operational security "need not be invariably opposed, but in practice they are very often in conflict." (20:xi) Valerie Adams contends that it is "doubtful" that any censorship system can be relied on to prevent damaging leaks concerning military information. (22:194) A recent case in point for the United States is Operation JUST CAUSE where, despite government precautions, the media was "tipped off" a few hours before the U.S. military intervention in Panama.

What can the government do to prevent such occurrences and maintain operational security? First, the government could simply decide to withhold all information regarding military actions. Although feasible, government resistance to releasing information could lead to repressive attitudes on information dissemination, with suppression of bad news for political reasons. (22:194) A second option, but one rapidly rejected, is for the government to take direct control of the media. This proposal is constitutionally prohibited and certainly politically unthinkable. A third option is for the military theater or on-scene commander to limit access to his area of operations. This is definitely possible, as military bases and theaters of operations are areas not traditionally open to the public as discussed in Chapter IV. This action taken to the extreme of totally excluding the media, however, provides no

information to the public regarding military activities and therefore cannot impact public opinion. A fourth option is to restrict official statements to basic factual reports on operations and accept, as occurred in the Falklands Campaign, that there will be media speculation concerning ongoing operations. (22:190) It is inevitable that the media will analyze and interpret military operations, and that such commentary and speculation cannot be avoided. (22:172) To reduce the impact of speculation, perhaps the most that can be done is to ensure a sound factual basis of non-sensitive information thus reducing the time and space available for media conjecture which could actually prove operationally damaging. (22:172) A fifth option is to make as much information available as possible but with simple and clearly defined guidelines as to what is publishable. (22:190) Perhaps the best solution is to relate the degree of information restriction with the extent of damage which disclosure could do to vital national interests. For example, in limited conflict, there may be little prospect of media commentary damage to fundamental national interests. In a period of sustained hostilities or general war, with resultant damage greater, harsher measures might be acceptable to the public, although given modern communications, steps necessary to enforce censorship would be so "draconian" that our democratic traditions might well be placed in jeopardy. (22:194) As the House of Commons Defence Committee report noted, "how far democratic freedoms have to be foregone depends on the nature and intensity of the conflict in which the country is

engaged, and will ultimately be a political judgment for the Government of the day to take." (20:xvniiii)

#### Disinformation and Misinformation

Should the government use the media to disinform or misinform the enemy? After the Falklands Campaign, the House of Commons Defence Committee observed that although the British did not "persistently" use the media to disinform the Argentines, "if in the judgment of those directing the war, such tactics are necessary for operational purposes then pursuit of such a policy would be justified." (20:lv) However, the report also warned that misleading information "presents risks to future credibility and may, if its purpose is misunderstood, alienate those in the media through whose good will the government's message must be put across." (20:lvi) In the next conflict, it is certainly possible the United States would consider using the media to misinform or disinform the enemy, who in all likelihood will be attentive to the U.S. media. As the House of Commons Defence Committee Report observed, such campaigns through the media can be useful

There can be sound military reasons for withholding truth from the public domain and equally sound reasons for believing particular rumors will redound to one's own side advantage. We . . . believe that such . . . acts of misinformation can generally be justified if their net contribution to the prosecution of war is a positive one and if they are calculated to protect operations of major importance." (20:xiv)

But disinformation and misinformation campaigns are not without risk to the government. The Committee Report also warned

The public, in general, is quite ready to tolerate being misled to some extent if the enemy is also misled, thereby

contributing to the success of the campaign. . . . It is vital that no government seeks, in its urgent need to prosecute a war successfully, to insulate itself from the process of democratic accountability. Any democratic government will recognize that if it misleads the public so comprehensively that it becomes impossible to question the wisdom of continuing with a campaign (especially if this is followed by a major failure), then it will have to suffer the political consequences. (20:xiii)

One need only to notice the demise of the Argentine ruling Junta on the heels of the surrender of their Falklands forces to the British realize the impact of losing the public trust.

#### The Importance of Public Opinion

P.J. Fitzpatrick writes that "public opinion is a dominant force in the formulation of national policies by democratic governments," and that "in war, the media are the link in the relationship between the armed services, politicians and the public. . . ." (23:4) A free nation, accustomed to public discussion must be kept accurately and truthfully informed about the employment of its military forces. As General Douglas MacArthur wrote in 1942:

One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press. . . .  
. . . If the public do not know the truth, their imaginations at once come in to play. If they do not know, their confidence is reduced. (24:41)

Newspaper reporter Bill McCloud, commenting on the Vietnam War recently remarked, "If it's worth fighting for, then it's worth telling the truth about." (25:75) These statements are reminiscent of Clausewitz's concept of trinity--the people, the government and the military forces united in support of an objective. How does the American Public understand, accept, and support the role and employment of our nation's military

forces if not through the American press? Clearly, the media are the government's key to reaching and influencing public opinion on such matters. Valerie Adams states

The role of the media in a democracy is not merely to pass on information for information sake, but to enable the people to know, understand and judge the actions undertaken by their government on their behalf." (22:181)

#### Government Credibility and Propaganda

Government credibility is vital in war. In the Falklands, despite the initial problems with media deployment with the task force, and media dissatisfaction with the government's censorship and public relations approach, the Thatcher Government nonetheless maintained its credibility throughout the campaign. (20:lii) The timely release of significant and accurate information in war assists in maintaining credibility, and such information should be, of course, limited to that which will not be of value to the enemy. Failure to release information at times, however, does not necessarily undermine government credibility. (20:xix)

Thatcher Government credibility also gave the British a significant propaganda edge over the Argentines. Jim Becker, a Voice of America radio broadcaster told the Defence Committee

In Washington, where VOA news programs are put together, pride of place invariably was given to reports from London. Those from Buenos Aires were always treated with deep suspicion, and in time ignored almost entirely. VOA is said to have 80 million listeners. (20:xix)

It is important that any United States government wartime information policy consider the value of propaganda and be prepared to promote its interests in the world media should

the need arise. The House of Commons Defence Committee Report cautioned that

Governments should not rely on the sense of fairness and objectivity of the world media, but should appreciate the importance of propaganda. The nurturing of world opinion in time of war is not a matter simply for diplomacy; information policy should recognize this to the fullest extent. (20:1x1)

In 1941, Fortune Magazine noted the value of truthful propaganda

Censorship is defensive, propaganda offensive. . . it is just as serious to publish untruth as to suppress truth. . . . There is a case for propaganda--good propaganda, of which the best is the truth." (24:28)

#### The Need for Good Military and Media Relations

The House of Commons Defence Committee Report observed a major problem between the military and the media in the Falklands Campaign "arose not out of fundamental difference of principle, but when the crisis suddenly erupted the relations were not good, because early decisions taken by the government did nothing to improve them, and because the media reacted to the inconvenience and frustrations that they suffered as a result with a striking lack of generosity." (20:1i) Just as British military-media relations were not good at the time of the Falklands Campaign, the relationship between the U.S. military and the media in the United States has suffered in recent years, as described in Chapter III. The need for good government- and military-media relations is at the root of the issue. The media are the primary means to inform American public opinion. It is therefore vital that military-media dialogues, such as those established by the Sidle Commission and the Department of Defense media pool system, continue.

Despite the fundamental differences in the military and media establishments, these same differences can work to both's advantage. It should and must be possible for the U.S. military to encourage informed press coverage, and for the U.S. media to provide accurate, interesting stories. An independent media acts as a check--an asset when the military is doing its job correctly. If the nation is pursuing a legitimate military action, media coverage acts as an independent witness and helps establish government credibility and positively influences public opinion. For example, in the Grenada Invasion, allowing media access on the initial phase would most likely have supported the government's position that the invasion was necessary to protect the American students, and that the invasion had the added benefits of capturing significant Soviet weaponry stockpiled for use in the region, and establishing governmental control on the island. The final comment of the Sidle Commission's Report provided an excellent summary of the problem and the means to improve to improve the relationship:

An adversarial--perhaps "politely critical" would be a better term--relationship between the media and the government, including the military, is healthy and helps guarantee that both institutions do a good job. However, this relationship must not become antagonistic--an "us versus them" relationship.

In other words, the optimum solution to ensure proper media coverage will be to have the military--represented by competent, professional public affairs personnel and commanders who understand media problems--working with the media--represented by competent, professional reporters and editors who understand military problems--in a nonantagonistic atmosphere. (26:32)

Military cooperation with the media can also have some significant benefits for the government effort. For example, the

House of Commons Defence Committee Report observed that

Countries are not acting altruistically in facilitating media coverage of a war from their own side of the fighting: they are exploiting the natural tendency of journalists to sympathize with the troops whose dangers they are sharing in order to give their country an advantage in the information war. (20: Xlviii)

Surely, it is in the nation's best interest for the military and media to understand and cooperate with one another. In wartime, this relationship will be vital.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

Our fellow citizens think they have the right to full information in a case of great concernment to them, for it is their sweat which is to earn all the expenses of the war and their blood which is to flow in expiation of the causes of it. (23:1)

--Thomas Jefferson

Despite several problem areas, Thatcher Government censorship policies during the Falkland Islands Campaign served the interests of the United Kingdom well. The two-and-one-half month campaign, fought over 8000 miles from Great Britain in a remote area of the world, far removed from existing communications, enabled the government to impose a limited censorship program which supported operational security and provided basic public information. As the Ministry of Defence Chief of Public Relations stated at the conclusion of the campaign, it is unlikely that the British Government will ever again undertake a military effort which allowed total military control over press transportation, support and communication to and from the area of operations.

In addition to the recommendations offered by the House of Commons Defence Committee Report to improve the effectiveness of British military-media relations, Thatcher Government censorship of the British media during the campaign also provides a limited military censorship model for the United

States. The Falklands model is best suited for the United States in low intensity, remote conflicts where the media are dependent on the military for transportation, logistics, and communications support. The model's application in a major war, in Europe for example, where the ability of the government to deny or control media access due to well-established and interconnected national and foreign media, is much more limited, if not impossible.

The success of military censorship in wartime is highly dependent on the state of the relationship between the government and the media. As seen in World Wars I and II for example, the relationship between the U.S. government and U.S. media was excellent, and the media, who performed significant voluntary self-censorship, did much to ensure the success of the government's censorship program and national war effort. In Korea, censorship was originally not implemented, but as conflicts arose over the classification and sensitivity of information, both the military and the press agreed that the imposition of censorship was the only way to maintain operational security and report the war to the American Public. Years later in Vietnam and Grenada, censorship was never implemented, yet the relationship between the press and the military degenerated into mutual suspicion and distrust. In recent years, attempts have been made by both groups to improve that relationship. Hopefully, members in a position to do so, should be able to implement the Sidle Commission's recommenda-

tions to bring the two establishments to a higher level of understanding and cooperation.

Since 1984, that effort has proven difficult. The press has become more independent, assertive and professional in its approach to newsreporting. Moreover, journalists continue to attempt to expand First Amendment rights to allow greater access to information in areas heretofore denied. At the same time, remarkable breakthroughs in communication technologies have made it possible to communicate instantaneously, orally and visually, from anywhere on earth.

Fully recognizing that it contradicts our democratic values of free speech and a free press, there are, as seen by the successes and shortcomings of the British Falklands experience, benefits to be gained by the United States in developing, at minimum, some contingency planning for military censorship. As the Wartime Information Security Program has not been replaced, it is in the best interest of the United States to develop a replacement program, before it is suddenly and unexpectedly required. Such a plan should provide a rational approach to identifying and protecting sensitive military information for operational security. Limited conflicts will most likely pose fewer, and less damaging, operational security problems for the U.S. Conversely, a major war which threatens the nation's existence, however, entails so much greater risk that security compromises could have devastating effects on the nation's ability to survive. It is therefore clear that different levels of conflict require, or at least suggest, an incremental approach to censorship. Secondly, a plan should

also affirm the requirement for public information regarding military actions, and recognize the importance of public opinion on which the government seeks to focus attention on issues it considers essential to a conflict or to its resolution.

Third, a plan would ensure that the military and media were aware of the plan's intent and procedures before implementation, thus allowing advance planning and coordination between the two establishments. As the House of Commons Defence Committee Report stated, "if censorship can be justified, there should be no reason to be unnecessarily reticent or dilatory in establishing the framework for its application or explaining its rationale to representatives of the media." (20:liii)

Fourth, a plan should promote accuracy in reporting through central focal points to substantiate information. As the Defence Committee Report observed, "to be effective, censorship has to be controlled by those senior enough and close enough to the center of operational decision making, strategic and tactical, to know what it and what is not sensitive." (20:liv)

Finally, the plan, if and when implemented, should complement government credibility and propaganda efforts.

Without such a plan, it is perhaps likely, based on our Korean experience, that there would be significant confusion and distrust among reporters and military officials as to what was or was not considered sensitive military information. As Robert E. Summers wrote in 1942, "what is needed are . . . definitions of what is and what is not of value to the enemy. "The press will never cooperate if the rules are wholly lacking

in reality." (24:27) Secondly, it is conceivable that sensitive information may be divulged through unwitting publication or broadcast of sensitive information, giving the enemy information which could be of great value counterproductive or even fatal to the war effort. Third, it is possible that information reported by the media without censorship would be less accurate and more speculative due to lack of official focal points to comment on media reports.

Military censorship is controversial, and requires significant thought and planning. The House of Commons Defence Committee Report commented that, "government information policy must obviously be tailored to the needs and conditions of a conflict, but it reflects judgments, either implicit or explicit, on the issues of principle." (20:11) Military censorship must be coherent and rational if it is to obtain the proper objectives. It should be limited to guard only essential information, constrained in as narrow a scope as possible and only operational for an absolute minimum time. Military censorship should promote operational security but recognize the need for public information. In order to protect operational security and meet other government wartime objectives, the truth may require a "bodyguard of lies" until such time that the truth can ultimately be told. (27)

The military must educate the media as to its role and requirements for operational security. Conversely, the military must understand the requirements of the media, including the critical role the media play in influencing public opinion. The British Falklands experience not only offers several pit-

falls to avoid in this relationship, it also reminds of the possibility that a democratic nation may have to place some of its values at risk because it realizes the greater danger of losing the democracy for not doing so. A balance must be found between operational security and the public's need to know about their government and military in wartime. As Frank Luther Mott wrote during World War II:

A delicate balance is required, The preservation of the balance command the utmost in sincere fidelity to two great causes; the cause of a free press, and the cause of a nation at war. It requires intelligence, patience and wisdom. (1:5)

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